



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release:

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MEDIA ADVISORY

State Health Department Schedules Media Conference Call To Discuss Influenza Vaccine Shortage (Statement Follows Below)

BISMARCK, N.D. – To discuss the recently reported shortage of influenza vaccine, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a telephone media availability Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2004, at 2:30 p.m. The following department officials will participate in the 2:30 p.m. conference call:

- Dr. Craig Lambrecht, state medical officer
- Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist
- Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager

To connect to the conference call, the media is asked to follow these steps:

- 1) Dial 866.262.1846.
- 2) Once you are connected, enter *3282378*. (Please note: The star key must be pressed before and after the pin number.)
- 3) If you have trouble connecting, call the help desk at 800.263.3863 option 2.

Members of the media who wish to attend in person can meet at 2:30 p.m. in the AV Room 210 located on the second floor of the Judicial Wing in the State Capitol Building, Bismarck, N.D.

For more information about the conference call, contact Heather Weaver at 701.328.2378.

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Influenza Vaccine Shortage
Statement From Dr. Craig Lambrecht for the North Dakota Department of Health

The North Dakota Department of Health is very concerned about the recently reported influenza vaccine shortage and the implications for North Dakota. This clearly is a challenge for all of us.

The main challenge we face is to protect as many high-risk North Dakotans as possible with the supply of vaccine we have. We are working with our public and private health-care providers to determine how much vaccine currently is available in the state and how much we expect to receive. In addition, we will work aggressively to secure any additional vaccine that becomes available.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified certain groups of people who should be vaccinated first because they are at increased risk for severe complications from the flu. These include:

- Children ages 6 to 23 months.
- Adults age 65 and older.
- People ages 2 to 64 who have chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease or asthma.
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Children age 6 months to 18 years who are on chronic aspirin therapy.
- Health-care workers who provide direct patient care.
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months.

Because of the shortage of vaccine, it's very important that we protect as many high-risk people as possible. If you aren't part of a high-risk group, please don't ask for a flu shot. If you are in a high-risk group, you should be vaccinated. People in high-risk groups should contact their health-care provider to determine the availability of vaccine.

We all need to work together to prevent the spread of influenza this fall and winter. The most effective ways to do this are the simplest: wash your hands often, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and stay home from work or school if you are sick.

I'm confident that North Dakotans will work together to protect those among us who are the most vulnerable to the complications of influenza.

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Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.